1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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439 "I heard that you are buying things we make, as you did last year in my village. I have come with balata from my uncle, and I brought a stool to sell. Would you like to see it?"

And so Bayo brought us his stool. It was not well carved. Indeed, compared with even the least skilled carvings on benches and combs and trays and food-stirring paddles, the workmanship was crude. But one does not refuse a proffered article bruskly, and we sat down to talk with him about it.

531 It was Bayo who gave us our first insight into the meaning of Bush Negro designs, gave us our first information about this, as about so many other customs and practices. What is carved on the wood which the men work with such care has significance, and carries meaningful symbols which the Bush Negro is unwilling to reveal. That there might be symbolism in the art we had before suspected, but usually, when we asked, we heard the skillful evasions of which the Bush Negro is master. He did not know. Only the carver himself could say, but the carver was away or long dead. Or we would hear that it was carving, that it was carved to beautify it, that it was of an in-and-out design. Or, with carefully pointing finger that indicated the ornamentation, the Bush Negro would say, "This is wood."

531 So we talked to Bayo about his stool, expecting to hear one of the usual replies. But this time and without any urging we heard what we had so long wondered about. "Look," he said, tracing out the lines of the interwoven pattern, "this is a man, this a woman. This is her head, those her breasts, this her womb. Here are his head, his arms, his legs. We call this *womi-ko-muye*—man-and-woman. Here are the children which they will make," and his hands traced another series of designs on the top of the stool.

439 We bought his stool, and he stayed and talked of many 989 things. Did we want to buy an *obia*—a charm? One day he would like to become an obia man. Already he could make obias which protect the wearer when he walks on the water.

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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524 The man looked so moved by what he told us that we had qualms about continuing the conversation with him about his dead family, and so we asked him about the game board. "Why is it, Kasanya, that young Amnika of your [322] village said he could not make us a game board, fine carver that he is? You yourself know that the board is just a piece of wood with holes in it for the seeds. It is not beautiful; there are no decorations on it."

765 "It is because he is young. His hair isn't white like mine.
524 Making an adji board is a big thing. It's not a little thing. It is on this we play when the body of the dead lies in the house of mourning to entertain his spirit, his yorka. Only [554] an old man who has lost his wife may make a board for this game which is played for the dead."

"But suppose he did make it?"

[178] "Then he would get a kunu, Bakra," he said with an impatient cluck which was intended to deplore the white man's inability to understand simple things.

776 And so again we came to kunu, and since he himself had brought it up, we decided to stir the hole once more to see what was in it. Kasanya talked with less hesitation than we had come to expect. It is easier for an older man who has had experience with the spirits and knows their ways to talk about the supernatural. He understands what he may and may not do, and then, too, with his greater knowledge he can tell more without offending the spirits who disapprove of a man's telling too great a part of his store.

"Yes, Bakra, kunu is a difficult thing for you, a white man, to understand. But we black people know what brings kunu. Many things bring kunu. Look, I made three children. Fine men all three. One died, the second died, the third died. . . ."

688 This was his story. His wife's mother's brother brought the curse on his family. He had cut a new field, and the trees he had felled and the brush he had cut had been lying for some time, as was proper, that the dead wood might [241] be burned off to clear the ground so that the ash might enrich the soil.

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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THE PROVISION GROUND

It is the woman's task, then, to see to the food which the Earth Mother yields, while the men are busy hauling lumber and making boats, hunting and fishing, and carrying the white man's loads to the city. In the leisure of the rainy season, while the women cut up the trade cotton cloth into long, narrow strips and sew them into cloths of traditional design, the men are at work carving fine things out of wood.

When the big rains come a man might busy himself carving doorposts for his new house, or he might make a paddle to put away in his personal treasure house, so that, when he is ready to take a second wife, he might have the proper gifts to make her. Another might be making a small canoe paddle for his first daughter. She is four, perhaps, and already is of help to her mother in the field, carrying water from the river in a small Indian jar. Soon she will be strong enough to have the cutting of the kamemba begin—a few slashes about the navel at first . . . He will cover the surface of the paddle with beautiful traceries, each design a meaningful symbol, and to add to its beauty he will darken it with a mixture of oil and charred rice hulls. When it is finished it will be of a reddish-brown color, slender, and smooth to the touch of his fingers as the skin of his woman-child. Combs, food stirrers, trays, stools, peanut pounding boards, and, if a man likes, mortar and pestle—all these are carved when the rains are heavy and there is no work to be done on the river or in the bush.

So the work is divided. A man does a man's work—wood, iron, hunting the game animals of the bush, and catching fish in traps, making baskets of wood fiber—all that is a man's affair he does. And the woman, tending the fields and cooking for her family, pounding palm nuts in her mortar to make palm oil, grating the bitter cassava to make flour free from the poison that is in the roots, caring for her house and carving calabash dishes with the symbols of men and women and fertility—woman does what it is woman's lot to do.

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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175 Now we were in the true, true Saramacca country, the land which the Bush Negro feels to be entirely his own. White men, it is true, had been here before, but only a handful, and the gods of the river, who were powerful, saw to it that of these not many got back to the white man's land. True, true Saramacca country! Every Bush Negro we met on the lower river spoke of it with the deepest feeling.

"It is all right here," one man after another had said, "but wait until you see the upper river, the true-true Saramacca!"

It was here that the first Bush Negro villages had been built, though this seemed fabulous to the strangers who, in strong boats, guided by men who were wise in the moods and courses of the river, had had nine days of hard travel on the way. The lower-river villages began to appear only after peace had been declared and had proved lasting. Eighty-six years ago men from the upper river who lived beyond the Granman's own village, in the Grand Rio, had come down and built the village of Gansee, which was some four hours' paddling upstream from the railhead.

We spoke of this to Bibifo, who himself was born in this country.

"You may well wonder, white man."

361 103 Here was no danger of having to wrest a camp from the bush at night, when the short tropical dusk came to overtake the traveler. Villages followed close, one upon the other. Here was Ma'lobbi, where the beauty of the wood [322] carver's art had made us linger beyond the time allotted to us for making the journey from S'ei to Asindopo Lantiwe. Here was Hei Kununu—High Mountain—which rose on a [133] steep slope above the river, and was pleasant to see after the long stretches of flat plain that lay below. Semoisi, noted for its riches, was there, and Pempeh, bearing a name well known in the Ashanti country in Africa. Here villages 20 were so close to each other that they could announce our approach on the talking drums.

"What is it we hear, Bayo?" we would ask.

"They are cutting down trees, Bak'a."

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WOMEN AT WORK

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Tenemi made ready to carve a calabash dish. She sat down on her work stool, and on the ground beside her she put down a small knife, a piece of broken glass, and half of a calabash shell. The inner pulp had just been removed, and both the inside and outside of the gourd were of a pale green color. She had dipped it in water before she brought it here, and now with the point of her knife she deftly marked her design. The curves in the center, covering almost the entire inner surface, formed the body of a woman, she said, who was big with child. The geometric tracings in parallel narrow lines across one portion of the top was the Aboma snake, euphemistically called the G'an Tetei, the great creeper, or vine. Taking up the piece of glass, she began to scrape away carefully the soft pulp inside the outlines of her design.

In the entire village there was no woman who worked faster at carving calabash dishes than did Tenemi. In less than half an hour the dish was ready to be placed on the high platform where the maripa nuts were drying. With the sun upon it, the calabash would turn a deep cream color, but where the knife had borne down, it would show a golden brown, and where the glass had scraped away the pulp, the color would be a paler gold, so pale that it would be almost the cream of the unornamented outer surface.

"The large closed gourds are not done fast. Those are carved on the outside, and must be worked cleverly. But this does not take long. I am making this for you. When it is finished I will bring it to you. You must give it to your girl-child when she grows big."

She herself had made four children, but only two of them were living. The oldest, a daughter, carried a child in her womb. Tomorrow she would come to the village, and Tenemi would bring her.

"She was afraid to come. Women who are with child must be very careful."

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Ceremonial benches incised with symbols of fertility and magic.

[Facing p. 272]

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THE ARTIST OF MA'LOBBI

As we walked toward the chief's house we looked about us, seeing again the evidence that here at Ma'lobbi there were men who knew how to carve wood, seeing why it was that our paddlers had spoken of it as a place for fine work.

"Ai, at Ma'lobbi they are good carvers."

Here was a house with its doorposts elaborately carved; there a beautifully worked rice tray, lying where it had been left by the woman who owned it, until she should need it later in the day for winnowing her rice; farther along a great bench stood, with the designs cut through in a fluid progression over top and sides.

The captain was in the lower portion of his two-story house when we entered. Several of the older men, who had been present at our earlier visit and who remembered our gifts of tobacco, came to join us, as the news of our arrival spread through the village. Soon the women were standing about, motioning to the white woman to come with them.

The house in which the captain received us was larger and more imposing than the others in the village. It was his *gudu-wosu*—his treasure house. Its lower portion, where we sat in conversation with him, was where he worked. Above, where none of his wives might enter, his wealth was stored. Here he kept the pieces he had carved, and from here drew from time to time the presents he gave his wives. Here lay the wealth which his nephews would inherit when he died. But below, in the partially open shelter, was his workshop where he fashioned rough logs into stools and paddles, combs and food stirrers, trays and canoe seats, and all manner of objects which he and his women used in their daily routine.

All about the walls hung tools. There were machetes, whose sharp blades showed a reflection of fire from the sun which slanted on the wall. We had never seen so many of these bush knives on display, nor, for that matter, such an array of tools anywhere on this river. From projecting boards or nails driven into posts hung several compasses, their hinged arms sharp-pointed, so that the craftsman might describe the perfect circles on the wood he carved.

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This they had learned from the whites long ago, and now everywhere on the river compasses were seen, or carvings which showed their use. The machete, the small sharp knives which lay about here on the work-table, the compass, and sand made up any Bush Negro carver's tools. But here at Ma'lobbi in this workshop of the captain were tools from the white man's city, collected by himself on his journeys down to the government office to receive his yearly allowance, or by his men who had been to the French shore and learned of the ways of the outside world. There was a plane to make the blade of a paddle smooth as the skin of a child, and there were two others in addition to this one, we were assured, in the treasure house of the upper story. Hammers, too, were useful for making boats, and even for smaller carvings like benches. There was also a bit and auger, though we were never convinced that the captain himself had ever put it to its more prosaic uses.

"I have many more up there," said the captain, pointing to the upper story. "I like them. If a man likes his tools, then they help him in his carvings. As he sees with his eyes, so they cut. I have always liked my tools, white man. I have spent much time with them."

A young man sat to one side shaving down a block of wood with a knife which he held.

"He is not carving," the captain said, following our eyes. "He is making a piece for this," he explained, indicating a plane. "Now is not the time for carving. There is too much to be done. This is the time for cutting wood, for taking the rafts down the river, for making boats, for bleeding rubber trees for the white man, and for hunting game. When the great rains come, then men sit about and carve."

As he spoke our eyes traveled to the various carvings which stood about the workshop. In one corner leaned a paddle which caught our attention because of its darkened color, and the patina which long use had given it, so that it seemed made of ebony. Against another wall were several stools, all richly ornamented with carvings, while beside us,

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and so close that our hands, moving about to find a rest, touched its top, and sounded an involuntary rhythm, was an apinti drum. We exclaimed at its beauty, for in form and carving it rivaled the one we had admired in the council house of Granman Yankuso, and we were determined to try to buy it. But we turned our conversation to other things. A stranger in this bush soon learns from the Bush Negroes to broach an important request gently, remembering the cautioning proverb spoken by the chameleon.

We talked of carving, of the white man's coming back some year when the rains were heavy to sit by and watch the men make paddles and benches, so that he might learn, as children learn.

The captain was politely skeptical. It took a Saramacca hand to do this work. But he smiled, "Ma kye, if you have the gods anything is possible."

"That's a fine paddle in the corner."

He brought it out, and we admired it. Would he sell it to us?

"You must ask its owner."

"Didn't you make it, captain?"

"Yes, but it is not mine to sell. I gave it to my wife." He would see, however, if she wanted to sell it. He would himself go and call her.

As he went, he gave us the paddle that we might examine it. We ran our hands over the smooth top, the design, the beveled blade. It was not so tall as the paddles used by the men, nor was its blade so broad as those used in steering the great boats through the rapids. In form, it was quite different from the round-bladed type used by the Indians of the region, for it was slender and came to a sharp point, and at the other end the carving formed a crutch-shaped hold into which the hand fitted.

We studied this carving. Parts of the design had meaning for us because of their realistic treatment. The motifs of others were recognizable to us from explanations we had been given of other carvings. But there were still details

of design which only the carver himself could name, or someone who knew the symbolism of the art tradition in which this paddle was carved.

During our first visit to these people we had been completely balked by the unwillingness of the Bush Negroes to discuss their carvings. In answer to our questions we got delightful evasions, but with the coming of Bayo to our base camp, carrying his crudely carved stool, we learned enough to make it clear that there was a great deal of symbolism in the carving of the Bush Negroes and, as our knowledge of these symbols increased, it became increasingly easier to get descriptions of carvings in terms of the meanings and values these held for the Bush Negroes themselves.

Now, sitting in the workshop of one of the finest of Saramacca carvers, the captain of Ma'lobbi, we traced those parts of the design which we knew, mentioning their significance to the men who were about.

"There are two snakes," we said, pointing to the realistically entwined bodies which formed the upper portion of the hand grip, ending at the top with recognizable heads, and with mouths held open, which supported symmetrical figures of the top of the paddle.

"Aboma snakes," one man said, verifying to himself our statement.

"These," we continued, "are the teeth of the great lizard—*bamba tande*—and this part below the hand-grip reaching part way toward the blade is a carved chain, and you call it *moni mo' maye*—money is more than woman."

The men laughed. "Awa, so it is. The man knows about Saramacca carving."

And one of them took up the explanation, pointing out the two symmetrical figures which were posed opposite each other above the mouths of the snakes. "These are monkeys. They are women monkeys. No, don't call them just keskesi, their name is makaka," he went on, giving us the name of the species, when we spoke the word for monkey. "See the ears, the heads, the breasts. Ai, I

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531 The greater part of these carvings men made for women,
431 and it was a rare woman who did not take pride in the excellence of the carvings given her, though often it must have been the pride in something which had traditional value, for it would be false to assume that among any people are all men equally endowed with creativeness and all women with sensitive appreciation of what is created.

462 As among so many peoples, two or three types of art
530 were to be found. There was the same sex division in the
305 art of these people as existed in all other aspects of life, and the men were the wood carvers. The sharpest division in the art of the men was that between the secular and the religious. The religious art was crude. A block of wood, roughly shaped, with several cuts to indicate a face, perhaps a break in the line to represent the neck, and a few more strokes in the wood to differentiate the upper part of the woman's body, and there stood an ancestral image, or a village god. Often white clay was added to this, and sometimes alternate stripes of white and red, or white, red, and black, but when seen on a village path underneath a low open shelter, what color there once was had become
[308] weathered to a dull gray. The sacred art also included the
[309] charms called obias, worn on the neck, and about the upper
[301] arm, or wrist, or below the knee, or at the ankle. Many of these made pleasing ornaments. The white fiber dipped in red clay became a deep golden brown as the sun paled the crimson, and there would be the added color of a finger's length of blue and orange parrot feather, fastened inside the woven fiber square, and extending below the fringe of the weave. Into this woven square cowries might be sewn, two facing each other, or three, or four.

532 There was also the art of modeling, but this was so secret and so specialized that we were assured that not even all Bush Negroes knew of its existence, and modeled objects appeared only in the most important of the shrines.

With the religious art might also perhaps be grouped the red and white striped crooked sticks of the Kromanti

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We redoubled our urging.

"White man, do you know what it is to make an apinti—an obia drum?"

A man had to have the proper spirit before he might address the god of the tree from which the drum was to be made. When he had felled the tree, he cut off from the trunk the part he wanted to use and took it to his village. Over it he had to pour the blood of a cock which he sacrificed that the gods might come when the drum called them. The maker had also to provide sweet rum and cassava and eggs. The cassava was eaten by the people, but the eggs were for the spirit of the drum, and only half the sweet rum was drunk—the rest was poured over the wood. When the body of the new drum had been fashioned, the people gathered and sang, but they did not dance, for the head yet remained to be made. A pingo, or a deer, might furnish the skin, but these animals were shot where they had been tracked in the bush, and not offered to the drum. Only chickens were given it. And when the drum was complete, then the maker sang his song alone.

"But the drum is not finished yet. It can be played on, for it has a head, and its spirit has been satisfied. But the carving is not yet done. I have worked on it a long time," he repeated. "I want them to play it for my spirit when I am dead."

A silence fell as he finished. There was nothing more to be said.

"White man, we have sat together in pleasure. You have come to the true, true Saramacca from far away. You have bought the carvings of my people. The apinti drum I cannot sell you. But this stool you like I want you to have."

He took up one of the round-topped benches, with carefully worked sides, and four purple-heart inlays on top, each in the shape of a fowl.

"Take it with you to your white man's country. When you show it, write on a paper that the captain of Ma'lobbi made it."

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DJUKA

The Bush Negroes of Dutch Guiana

BY MORTON C. KAHN

[352 532 372] 1 A

With an introduction
by Blair Niles and a foreword by Clark Wissler

THE VIKING PRESS
Mcmxxxi · New York

[Title Page]

[p iii]
[pp. i–ii Contain No Text]
1 A [For caption, see category 116, p. 204]

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IN NORTH-EASTERN South America, more precisely in the hinterland of Dutch Guiana, there is a unique civilization little known to the white men of this continent. We know much of the strange life of the Congo and of the fascinating customs peculiar to the inhabitants of the Malay jungles, for a number of explorers have brought from the Eastern tropics the interesting accounts of their experiences. But of the Surinam Bush Negro, Djuka, as he calls himself, who nearly two hundred years ago fought his way out of slavery, of the survival of his African customs in the jungles of South America, little has been told. 114 101

The flush tides of imperialism have passed over these people, leaving them practically unaltered and unknown, unique among the Negro peoples of the world. They still maintain the life of jungle dwellers of the immemorial past.

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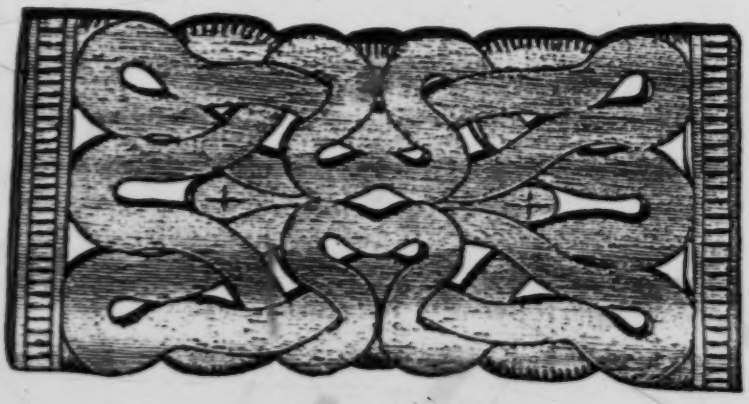
1 A [For caption, see category IIb, p.204.--Analyst]



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Chapter Two

UPRIVER

EIGHT miles an hour the river moves, down long 133
stretches of rapids and fast water, over great rocks in the river-bed. Any sort of outboard motor would be torn to pieces. There is nothing to do but pole upstream in dugout canoes to the Djuka country.

Bush Negro boatmen, with glossy thighs and heaving 502
backs, stand at the bows. They plant their great ten-foot poles in the river-bed and pull against them. As the motion of the boat carries them past the planted poles, they walk back along the gunwales, pushing the poles to the extreme end. They are retrieved, wheeled in a great arc, and again planted in the river-bed. This makes a rare picture in the sunlight on

1/2 [For caption, see category 27 16, p. 204.--Analyst]

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The blacks are proud of their water skill. Upsetting a canoe 484
or drowning a passenger are disgraces that no man can ever 648
live down. But they are rare occurrences. The Indians of this 501
part of the continent, not nearly so skilful, use a different
style of canoe and paddle. Djuka paddles are hewn with a
bush-knife from a solid plank of hard wood, and finished off [322]
with an ordinary pocket-knife. The handle is frequently
pierced with delicate ornamental work, the entire piece beau-
tifully balanced to handle easily. The men's paddles are as
tall as they are, but the women's are shorter and more elab-
orate. Tiny ones are given children as soon as they are big
enough to hold them, so that the Djuka's water skill is the
result of a lifetime on the river.

All the boats are dugouts; no canvas or bark canoe would 396
last long in these rapids. They are manufactured out of big [501]
trees, which are felled and allowed to season. Then the centres
are hollowed out with fire and adze; nothing is left but the
shell of the trunk, with perpendicular sides and a rounded
bottom. This is filled with water, into which hot rocks are
dropped. The heated water softens the wood, enabling
thwarts to be thrust in, forcing the gunwales apart. The ends
are then symmetrically curved up and are often carved. Seats,
as well as bow and stern pieces, are often carefully decorated.
The entire boat has a distinct West African style. When com- 501
pleted it is from eight to forty feet long. Ours has a large [17]
sunshade of thatched grass near the stern, because the white 648
man is too soft to endure the sun's rays. Under the shade we
have a camp-chair, a little comfort for the long trip. The

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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Surinam canoe

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Chapter Three

THE JUNGLE CLEARING

THE first indication of a village is a group of empty canoes made fast on the shore. Behind them, a short distance inland, is the village of Lombe, the first real Bush Negro town at which we stop on the Surinam River. 361

Villages are seldom situated on the river-bank, but a quarter to a half mile inland. The reasons for this are that the

1 A [For caption, see category 116, p. 204 - Analyst]

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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361 the trading-post, are so large as to have street-like roads extending across them. Others like Nu have only eight or nine huts.

342 The walls and roofs of the dwellings are made of grasses and reeds, intricately woven into a herring-bone pattern that can be seen in the photographs. So tightly are they woven that the jungle rain does not penetrate. The uprights are hewn out of tree trunks, and those that form the doorway are [325] often deeply carved. So great is the decorative spirit of these people that every common utensil is carved until it becomes a work of art.

The roofs extend far beyond the walls, so that the projecting part throws a shadow on the walls, which lowers the temperature inside. In front, the roof extends a yard or more to form a shade in which the blacks may palaver. In front of the huts, always, babies are grubbing about in the dirt and yelling prodigiously.

Here and there are slightly dilapidated huts. They belong [765] to people now dead. No one will live in them or venture to repair the ruin of time. Neglected, they sink into decay. The [754] witch doctor's hut is also a bit frowzy; it seems to be a badge of his profession, like the sugar cane planted alongside his doorway or the turtle-shell impaled on a staff near by. All three are symbols of his calling.

352 A wall of woven mat divides some of the huts into two [353] rooms, the back room being used for sleeping. The men have hand-made hammocks of woven cotton or grass. Their wives 342 are provided with sleeping-mats on the floor. The front room

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
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301 his much-loved ornamentation. Leg-bands of cotton cloth are frequently worn by both sexes, and where wire can be secured it is fashioned into arm or leg coils and paraded proudly.
751 778 Many necklaces and bracelets are used because they constitute magic amulets against evil spirits. Our own bracelets and necklaces can probably be traced back to this same origin.
302 The hair is another means of personal decoration, and therefore it is always dressed with deliberation. Carefully made partings divide the black skull into geometrical designs.
834 Despite the scanty nature of their clothing, the Djukas are quite modest, and never expose themselves. If a bahkra does, they avert their heads. It is a curious reflection on civilized morality that the almost naked blacks possess a large amount of dignified restraint, while the uncomfortably clothed white man is shameless in his nudity.

322 531 487 Here and there inside the dark huts can be seen bits of extraordinary wood carving. These are not crude utensils; every stirring-paddle or comb is a work of art worthy of a place in a museum, designed and executed in a way that is far from "primitive." The only way to acquire these objects is to bargain for them in Dutch money or tobacco, or cheap knick-knacks. Among the more distant villages money is use-

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Chapter Five

THE GAME TRAIL

ON the rivers we frequently encounter Djukas going downstream to Paramaribo or Albina on lumber rafts. The big logs are fastened together with lianas, twined about stakes driven into holes, and lashed to stout cross-pieces. Three paddlers stand upright on this raft and take it down the river like a canoe. 313

The lumber is arduously cut, the great trees being felled and chopped square with axes. A tree cut in the jungle will not fall to earth; the surrounding growth holds it upright. Therefore, days are spent in clearing a space of ground where the tree may come down. The vines and lianas must be cut away, and the vast buttressing roots severed. The tree is brought down in this clearing, hewn of its branches, and dragged into the water. Hardwood is too heavy to float, so [412]

1/1 [For caption, see category 116, p. 204; - Analysis]

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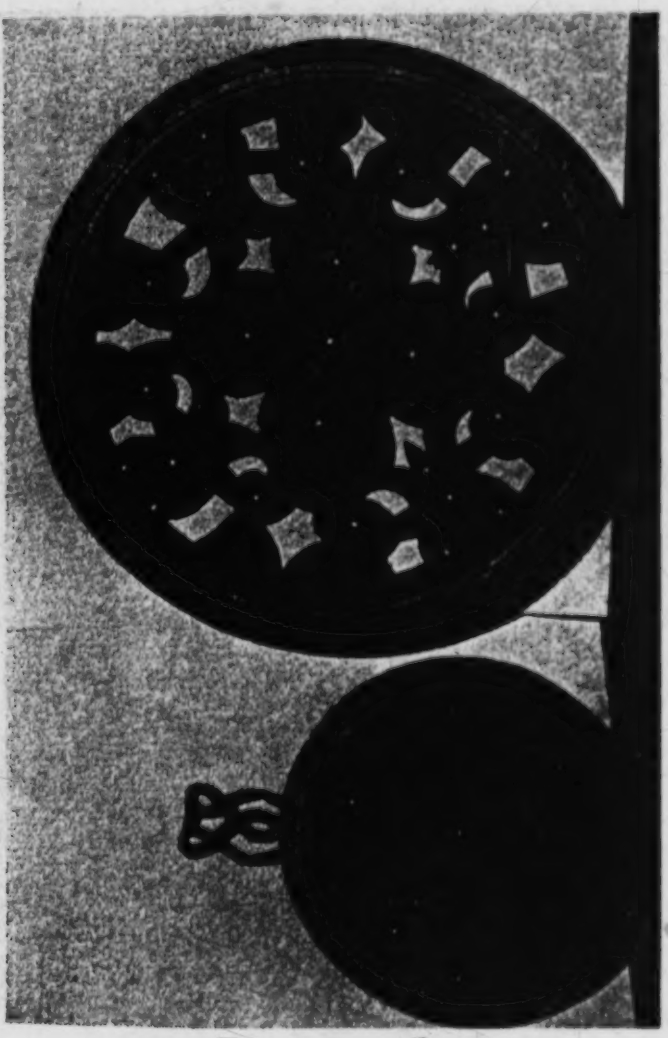

Carved Wooden Trays for Carrying Food. *Saramaccaner Tribe*, Upper Surinam River. The Central Figure on the Smaller Tray is That of a Dancing Woman.
Kahn-Granger Collection, American Museum of Natural History

[Facing p. 76]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

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Chapter Seven

THE ORGANIZATION OF LIFE

THERE are six tribes of Bush Negroes. These tribal divi- 619
sions date back to the black rebellion in the eighteenth century. Bands of rebels fled into the bush together, and remained together within their jungle home. In Stedman's narrative of the revolt we read of a punitive expedition being sent out against the bands living along the "Serimaca" and Upper Copenam Rivers. After years of incessant warfare, a treaty of peace was concluded in 1749 with the "Serimaca rebels." The descendants of this group are known today as the *Saramaccaner* tribe. Another outbreak of rebels occurred in the Tempati Creek district; they won their freedom in 1761 by a treaty signed at the Ouca Plantation, from which they came to be called *Aucaners*. A third band of rebels, under the command of the famous Chief Bonny, probably

[For caption, see category 116, p. 204.—Analyst]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

good deal of French patois. Most of the people also speak a fluent and, at times, a good French, which they have learned from the freed convicts, the libérés, of the largest French prison colonies in Guiana at St. Laurent, situated about forty miles from the mouth of the Marowyne River. Some of the Negroes of this tribe, as well as some of the Aucaners, sometimes visit St. Laurent for purposes of barter and trade. They also occasionally aid the French in transporting loads in their canoes up to the remaining placer mine.

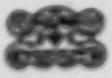
These Bush Negroes have seen thousands of white convicts and libérés. They have seen white men under the most degrading conditions possible to human existence on this planet. They have seen them shot down in the street. They have seen them rummaging in cans of tropical garbage that even a dog would shun, or escaping through the jungles, simply starving, hunted animals. Their point of view in regard to this may be summarized in the answer received when the question was put to one Boni as to what he thought of the Penal Colony; he said: *"Francie mong sung go dede"*—"Frenchmen soon die."

But just across the river from St. Laurent is the little settlement of Albina and the *Doocie mong* (Dutchmen). The Dutch have armed soldiers there so that the escaping libérés cannot cross.

As among the other tribes, the Boni are adept in the carving of wood. They make the usual kinds of highly decorated implements, such as large combs, pot stirrers, food trays carved out of sections of a tree trunk. The door posts and gables of their huts are often elaborately carved

The small Paramacca tribe does much less in the way of
322 wood carving than do the others of the Djukas. This was evidenced by the few pieces we were able to collect and was also known to be a fact by the Aucaner Bush Negroes who accompanied us to the Paramacca district. The motifs displayed upon the articles collected were practically identical with those found on Aucaner pieces.

123 In fairness to the Paramaccas, however, it must be mentioned from our experience among other tribes that collecting is much facilitated when one is cordially known. On a second or third expedition one is able to collect many times more specimens than upon a first introduction. The Bush Negroes are at first shy as a rule and not anxious to part with their belongings.



189 The tribes do not fraternize much with each other. Some
619 travellers report that the Aucaner and Boni tribes feel them-
609 selves superior to the others because they have less contact with the white man. If this is true, we cannot report any personal observation of it. A traveller has no more difficulty among them than among the Saramaccaner people. Some
628 ill-feeling between the Aucaners and Saramaccaners dates
609 back to the slave revolt, when the former observed their peace treaty so scrupulously as even to aid the slave-owners in re-

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

Chapter Eight

MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

THE Bush Negro family is not a family in our sense of the word. In the Surinam jungle the Djuka family is polygamous and matrilineal. The unit of society is the hut, where the mother and her children live.

In order to understand the marriage customs of the Bush Negro tribes it is first necessary to forget for the time being the system of patriarchal family life under which the white men of our age live. One unconsciously takes the customs of one's own society as a norm, and passes moral judgment on exotic customs by their deviation from that norm. This habit of thinking must be avoided as far as possible in considering a primitive society, though it is difficult even for an agile mind to make dispassionately the transition from one culture in which the father is dominant, to another, in which his position is not important. On the other hand, many of our

[For explan., see Letter of 11-1-31, p. 204. — Analyst]

[P. 118 is blank]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

It is indulged in as naturally as the other bodily functions.

"Marriage" is a convenient term for describing cohabitation among the Djukas, but it must be remembered that to them marriage is a purely economic institution. There is little ceremony. No one objects to getting married, because divorce is instantaneous and easy. The bonds of marriage are loose, and adultery, to use our harsh term, is customary.

Courting consists in presenting the prospective bride with elaborate wood carvings of useful implements. This wood carving has been developed by the Djukas to a high point of artistic perfection, as can be seen from the illustrative specimens, of which more will be said later. The approaching marriage is not looked upon as a departure from the maternal group; it is simply an arrangement for providing the man with a cook and the woman with children. The marriage of a captain or a Granman differs in no wise from any other; no especial care is taken of his bride.

We encountered two varieties of the process of choosing a husband. In the first, the girl has little to say, her husband being selected for her by her parents. In the second and more frequent practice the woman marries the man of her own choice, the parents making sure that the intended husband is a good provider. But since every Djuka buck is trained to the jungle crafts from childhood, this requirement can almost be taken for granted.

The husband marries frequently. He may marry outside of his village, or outside of his lo, but never outside of the tribe. Marriage requires a bride price, consisting of pieces of

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramaccaner

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Combs and Pot Stirrers with Chains. Each is Carved from One Piece of Wood. *Saramaccaner Tribe*, Upper Surinam River.

Kahn-Granger Collection, American Museum of Natural History. Photo by Herbert Heller

[Facing p. 124]

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramaccaner

Chapter Nine

MEDICINE AND MAGIC

NO one in Djuka land dies a natural death. Death is caused by witchcraft. At Santi Gron on the Saramacca River, preparations are being made for a burial. The whole village is excited. The women wailing are the relatives of the dead man. Children are crying because they see others crying. Unseen drums throb dully, making the hot air pulsate. The corpse lies in an open shed with only three walls—a death house (*dede oso*). Two girls of fifteen or sixteen are fanning it steadily to keep the flies away. The man died more than a week ago; all this time the body had been lying on a platform out in the tropical heat to decompose.

It is black magic that kills. Therefore the Bush Negroes make an effort to find out who made the magic that killed this man. An ancient ritual is employed. Three to ten days the corpse is left unburied, and in the humid heat the flesh undergoes a partial liquefaction. The putrescent fluid is gathered in a calabash cup and carried around from door to door.

[For caption, see category 1161 p. 204.—Analyst]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

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Carved Wooden Bowl for Washing Peanuts.
Kahn Corpus Collection, American Museum of Natural History

[Facing p. 176]

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramaccaner

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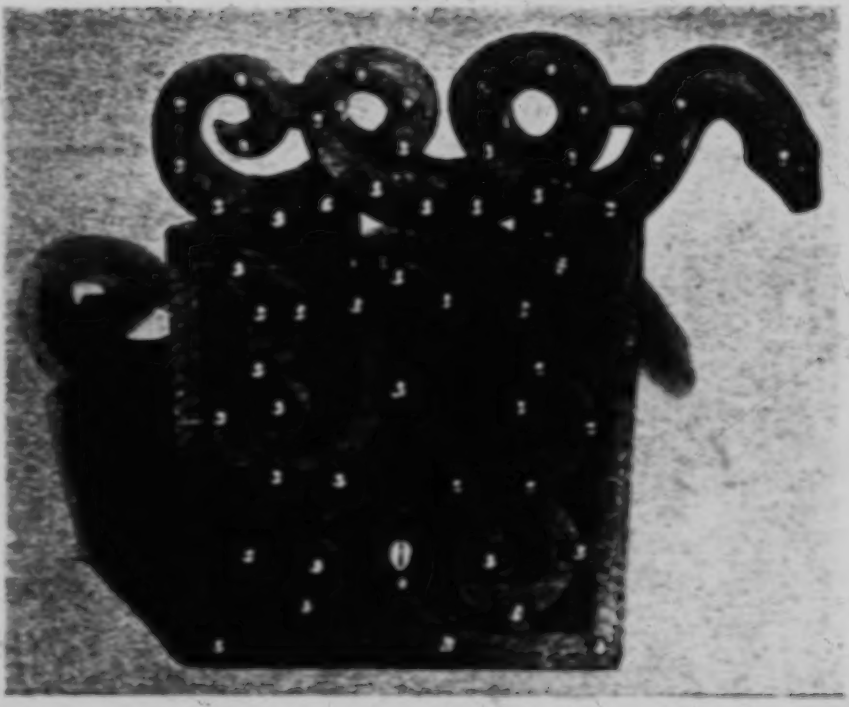

Snake Motif Bench Top or "Obeiah Bangi" (Sacred Bench) Carved from a Single Piece. *Saramaccaner Tribe*. On other benches and trays and similar pieces of wood carving the coil and serpentine motifs are often executed in such a way as to form figures of men and women.

Kahn-Granger Collection, American Museum of Natural History

[Facing p. 178]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Aucaner

Open Work Bench Top Carved from a Single Piece, Human Pair Motif. Aucaner Tribe.
Kahn-Cornejo Collection, American Museum of Natural History

[Facing p. 182]

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

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Carved Wooden Comb of the Boni Tribe, French Guiana. The central cross is a symbol of a woman surrounded by four phallic symbols in the form of curved arrows.
Kahn-Cooper Collection, American Museum of Natural History

[Facing p. 184]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

177 separated by ten thousand years of time and two thousand
112 miles of space. It has, however, been pointed out that both peoples had to face environmental conditions that are roughly alike, and that a similar world may well have led to certain similar responses and adaptations. In Dutch Guiana, on the other hand, we do know of a direct historical connexion with Africa, so that the customs, habits, art work, social organization, and general material culture of the Bush Negroes must undoubtedly be related to the similar culture of West Africa. A great many articles in everyday use among the Djukas are of West African design. African words and African habits can readily be identified.

177 We also know that certain articles used by the Djukas are borrowings from the aboriginal Indians of the district.
[25?] Thus the cassava squeezer, the *matapee*, and the whole technique of preparing cassava, the grater and sieve for the flour, are borrowed from the South American Indians. But by far the greater part of Djuka culture comes directly from the Dark Continent.

A Swedish anthropologist, Gerhard Lindblom, made a study of Bush Negro implements and wood carvings in
[22?] European museums, and compared them with the implements and wood carvings from West Africa, pointing out a number of homologous forms.

[143 The Granman's throne, an intricately carved wooden stool
365] made by the Djukas, as Lindblom pointed out, is similar in construction to those owned by the headmen of the Gold Coast, Ashanti, Slave Coast, and the Niger tribes. The ornate

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

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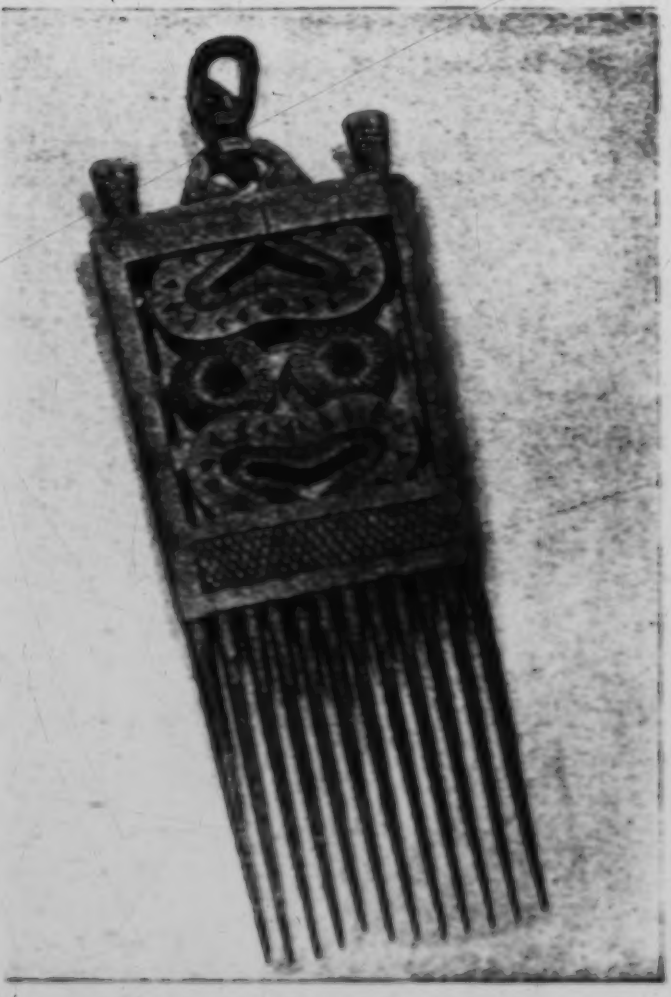

Carved Wooden Comb, Human Face Motif. *Boni Tribe.*
Kahn-Granger Collection, American Museum of Natural History

[Facing p. 108]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

177 The method of finding out who is responsible for the
[498] death of a man is found in many parts of the West Coast. The details vary considerably, but the essential idea that death is caused by witchcraft, and that some individual is guilty, is found in West Africa as well as in South America.
[764] The method of binding the corpse on a platform, covered with blankets of weeds, comes from the Gold Coast.

177 A number of Bush Negro words are African in origin.
192 *Lo*, the Djuka word for clan, designates a village in Yoruba or Ibo. The *quaqua*, the resounding plank which accompanies the drums, is possibly a Kikongo or M'pongwe word from the Ivory Coast. *Azeman*, meaning a kind of vampire, is an Ewe and Tshi word, as well as a Bush Negro term. The fetish house, the *kifunga*, is probably derived from Bacongo, Luango, Cameroons, or Togo, and the word itself is in all likelihood a Bacongo term. *Leeba*, meaning "river," is an Ewe word. *Akra*, designating a kind of ghost, is a Tshi word. *Makuku*, designating a Bush Negro fireplace made with three lumps of clay, is a Kikongo word, and the custom itself is derived from the Yoruba, Slave Coast, the lower Niger, and the Central and East Sudan region.

177 The carved woolen locks, the quintessence of Bush Negro
● [323] wood carving, are found also among the Ashanti, in Dahomey, and in the Sudan. The method of poisoning fish by
[224] beating into a stream the pulp of poisonous plants is common in South America among the Indians, but it is likewise found in West Africa among the Tshi, Yoruba, Togo, Congo, and Angolo peoples. The same is true of other Djuka fishing practices, such as the custom of fishing at night by torchlight.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

Chapter Twelve

PRIMITIVE ART

THE sense of beauty is not absent in the jungle. The Djukas have definite æsthetic feelings and in their wood carving they have a well-developed and conventionalized art form. Art is highly socialized and universally appreciated among them. There are definite artistic conventions and common conventionalized forms. 517

Among ourselves the production of artistic objects is confined to a small group of especially gifted individuals, whereas among the Bush Negroes it is a regular part in the life of proportionately many more individuals. Common objects of everyday use, which among ourselves are designed for utility alone, are developed by the Bush Negroes into elaborate objects of art. They represent one of the most characteristic features of any Bush Negro village. One is sure to find in every village the carved plates and long-tined combs and pierced decorations that constitute the art of the Bush Negroes.

[For caption, see category 114, p. 204.—Analyst]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

In the combs, paddles, and other pieces of wood carving illustrated in this book, the most casual observer will discern a great beauty of form and design. The sense of line, the feeling for balance, combined with elaborate conception and execution, compare well with the productions of the highly sophisticated artists of our urban civilization. All of the wood carvings, collectively known as *sanni* or *timbeh*, follow certain traditional patterns. The individual motifs, however, are products of the individual imagination, and, judging by the variety and originality of the designs shown herewith, that imagination is evidently quite fertile.

All the carving is done by men. There is a ceremonial significance to this. These wooden pieces are tokens of love.

Love in the jungle is not the etherealized sentiment portrayed by Victorian novelists. When a man and woman want each other the satisfaction of their desire is easy and immediate. The people are largely promiscuous among themselves. Under such conditions the existence of romantic sentiments is an impossibility.

Individual preference does, of course, exist, and this implies courtship. A man may want a woman who does not want him, and this implies wooing. The wooing consists in presenting the woman with specimens of sanni. Thus, every piece of wood carving is a token of love and affection, presented by a Bush Negro to his woman. The woman who accepts sanni from a suitor accepts his love along with it. The man naturally stores up a quantity of sanni in expecta-

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

tion of falling in love, and the woman is inordinately proud of her pieces of wood since each one betokens the affection of a male. A great part of the love-life among the Djukas is wrapped up in these carved household implements.

Those unfortunate natives who are not clever at handling a knife must trade fish or game or some other personal possession for sanni produced by a more deft handicraftsman. Almost any Bush Negro can hunt, fish, and care for a wife, but a man's value is enhanced in the eyes of the woman when he can carve artistically. The women appreciate him and the men respect him. Wood carving, therefore, is assiduously cultivated by the Bush Negroes from early childhood.

As sanni is a prized commodity everywhere, exchangeable for female favours, a great deal of time is spent on each individual piece. A single comb may take weeks to carve. The women are very good judges of sanni, and can tell a good piece at a glance. With such a critical audience, the Djuka artist is careful of his skill, and few awkward or ill-formed designs are seen. Boys between the ages of eight and ten years may be proficient carvers, and critical elders preside over their work, ready to point out any minute mistake. The father or uncle who is expert with the knife will train his son or nephew in the same tradition, so that certain families are known for their beautiful work.

This erotic significance of the wood carvings makes them difficult to obtain. The woman who sells one is not parting with a domestic utensil so much as with a treasured memento. Sentimental attachments are bound to appear. As

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

As one woman said: "He gave me this piece when we were first married. I won't part with it now." Usually an elaborate parley is necessary. The women are undecided whether to sell or not. They laugh, giggle, put their finger coyly in their mouths, joke bashfully with bystanders, and cannot make up their minds as to the price. They never know how much to ask for a piece. Sometimes they will mention a preposterous figure, hoping like a naive child that the strange bahkra will pay that much. But on such occasions a rebuke will make them more reasonable. Once an arrogant witch doctor intervened in a transaction with a Bush Negro woman, demanding angrily that she receive an exorbitant payment. His anger was squelched with a few sharp words, and, contrite, he sat up all night to carve an ornate implement to present to the bahkra as a peace-offering. Cunning Adjobo, the medicine man!

The Bush Negro implements are carved out of jungle wood. Some are made of lignum vitæ, the hardest wood known. A few of them are made of soft wood, light and spongy, but these are not popular. The small paddles are used for stirring in the cooking pots, and the combs are actually used for the hair. They are never worn as personal ornaments, and when not in use are hung up on the walls of the hut. The utensils are all made with common trade jackknives and compasses which are used as dividers. It is principally with these dividers that the serpentine motifs are executed. After the carving is finished the piece is smoothed off by rubbing it with matted grass and river

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

sand. A few chisels and carpenter's tools can occasionally be found. Where compasses or dividers cannot be obtained, a nail and piece of string are often used to execute the involved serpentine patterns.

Bush Negro sanni is not used for trading purposes. A few pieces find their way down to the coast, of course, but they are never articles of commerce among the Djukas. In some villages, and particularly among the Paramacca tribe, it is practically impossible to obtain many carvings. But the willingness to part with these objects naturally varies with the village and the individual. Being known to the natives greatly facilitates trade.

One outstanding feature of this work is the complete absence of colour. The finished piece shows the natural hue of the wood, and rarely anything more. An occasional variation is obtained by inlaying with rauda wood, brownheart, or purpleheart, but tints and dyes are seldom applied. A different shade is also obtained once in a while by branding or burning the wood with a hot iron. The Aucaners, who paint red and black devices on their large canoe paddles, represent exceptions to the general rule of showing only the natural wood shades.

Nearly all the pieces are utilitarian in origin and purpose, but some of them are so highly carved as to be of little practical use. These are much prized as gift pieces. The trays are actually used to carry food on, and also for winnowing rice. The stirring paddles dip into the food pot every evening. After being used they are washed with river water and hung up on a peg.

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Aucaner
Boni

A peculiarity of Aucaner wood carving is the system of
532 sign language imprinted thereon. If some of the pieces are
212 examined closely, it will be seen that they have odd symbols apparently placed at random, not conforming to the general pattern of the piece. These marks represent personal messages from the giver to the recipient, special indications or signs of affection, comparable to the marks at the ends of Victorian *billets doux*, indicating the place to kiss. Conventionalized letters are known as *schriefie*, a Bush Negro word that means "writing." Animal, bird, and human figure motifs are more common among the Boni and Aucaner tribes.

322 Besides the practical implements in everyday use there are
532 a number of trick pieces apparently made for no other purpose than to show the virtuosity of the artist. Thus there are pieces where a loose bauble is placed in a cup from which it cannot be forced. Some of the stools have tiny doors which
[352] open, and some of them are folding stools which close up like camp stools, yet are made from one piece of wood. There are stirring paddles with loose rings around the handles, carved from the same piece of wood and undetachable. Some have chains of wood attached, with separate links, all from one piece of wood. The Bush Negroes are also fond of mak-
[243] ing bush-knives in wood, or ornamental swords to be worn on ceremonial occasions. Small knives ordinarily seen in metal are also carved out of wood.

There are two general types of decoration, with one or two subsidiary devices. The commonest consists of pierced ornamental work, made from a single piece of wood. Except

2; Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

for benches, no pieced specimens are ever found. Because of the practical necessity of having a large number of benches, and the difficulty of executing both legs and seat out of a continuous piece of wood, benches are commonly made of several pieces of wood fitted together, as can be seen in the photographs. A number of them, however, are made from a single piece, and this continuity is preferred by the Djukas. The Africanesque crescent stools are carved from a single log.

Relief work is the second form of decoration. It occurs in the form of high relief on the plates and trays. It can be found to a modified degree on door-posts and other carved objects. Ornaments in low relief are represented by the calabash pieces, which are carved when green and allowed to dry.

Branding is done with a hot knife or wire, or else the piece may be charred by holding it in the flames. Circles are burned into the pattern by heating empty cartridge shells red hot and pressing them against the wood. Brass upholstery tacks, obtained in the white settlements of Paramaribo and Albina, are in especial favour, and some pieces are heavily laden with these. They fit in very well with the general spirit of Djuka art, and although the material is anachronistic, the effect is not.

Religious carvings, unlike the practical implements, are executed with a crudeness that is surprising. The fetish to the god Aflamu which was brought back to the Museum is nothing more than a rough section of pole with a crudely hewn face and seeds for eyes. Other religious pieces are

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

532 likewise roughly done. The reason for this seems to derive
778 from the general nature of primitive religion as it occurs among the Bush Negroes. Two explanations of this were given by native informants. If the god is a good god, and well disposed toward the black man, he doesn't care whether his fetishes are well executed or not. If he is a bad god he is going to continue to be bad, regardless of whether much time is spent on his fetishes or not. Another Bush Negro, questioned about this, said: "Me no sabby de Gadu luku"—"I don't know what God looks like." The primitive æsthetic feeling, apparently, is bound up with practical ends. There is absolutely no care or pains taken with religious objects, whereas erotic objects are finished with great skill.

222 There seems to be considerable variation between the tribes
189 of Djukas in the character of their art work. The Aucaner
532 wood carvings have, in general, a more refined and delicate cast than the wood carvings of their neighbours, the Saramaccaners and Boni. The differences in treatment of the motifs among the Bush Negro tribes and the general dissimilarities and likenesses of the carvings are best understood by consulting the accompanying illustrations.

412 The combs vary from two and a half inches to twenty-
322 four inches in length, and even these more immense combs see actual service. They are always made of a single piece, including the tines. For the most part they are made of harder woods, with occasional inlays. A number of them are trick pieces, with little ingenious devices that catch and hold the imagination of the primitive. For comparison, a West

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

African comb, from the region of Nigeria, is shown on page 175. It can be seen that the wooden comb is not a Djuka invention, as every characteristic of the Bush Negro pieces can be found on this West African piece, except the ornamental piercing.

The arts of weaving and basketry are not as highly developed among the Djukas as is the carving of wooden implements. The Bush Negroes do not weave the cotton cloth they wear. It is obtained, instead, by trading at the white settlements. The only weaving among them consists of cotton leg and arm bands—things that do not count for much so far as industry is concerned, but which expand the wearer's ego and add enormously to his or her self-esteem. The basketry of the Djukas, like the weaving, is simple and competent. Unornamented circular baskets, varying in size from a foot to a yard in diameter, can be seen in all the villages. They are used for carrying yams, rice, and foodstuffs generally. The finest basket work does not occur in these baskets, however, but in the cassava squeezers, those elongated tubes for producing cassava flour. These are beautifully woven of uniform rattan, and decorated with darker strips to form a simple pattern near each end. The finished product is an admirable piece of work, of which the owner must indeed be proud.

Pottery is made by the Djukas for utilitarian purposes only, and the solid black, absolutely undecorated clay ware has no particular element of beauty. The pots are black, stolid, and unimaginative. They are simply necessities.

But when the necessities of life have been provided for,

2: Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

But when the necessities of life have been provided for,
and leisure is at hand for more beautiful and tender endeavours, the Bush Negro, seated before his evening fire, sharpens his knife and begins marking, with fine, deft lines, the graceful outlines of another paddle or comb to please his woman.

List of Carvings Shown at Chapter Openings with Explanation of Symbolism

Carved Bench Top, *Saramaccaner Tribe:* Eight Women Dancing Around a Gadu Pole (title page)

Carved Bench Top, *Boni Tribe:* Stylization of Male and Female Figures (page 3)

Hair Comb, *Aucaner Tribe* (page 7)

Carved Pierced Bench Top, *Saramaccaner Tribe:* Two Male Figures Each Holding a Snake Aloft (page 27)

Carved Bench Top, *Saramaccaner Tribe:* Two Highly Stylized Human Figures (page 39)

Hair Comb, *Aucaner Tribe:* Male and Female Snakes (page 53)

Carved Bench Top, *Boni Tribe:* Vulva Surrounded by Phallic Symbols (page 63)

Carved Inner Surface of Calabash Gourd, African Bone Motif, *Saramaccaner Tribe* (page 83)

Carved Bench Top, *Saramaccaner Tribe:* Frog Design Executed with Serpentine Technique (page 91)

Hair Comb, *Aucaner Tribe:* Vulva Motif; the triangles on the cross bar represent snake teeth (page 119)

Hair Comb, *Saramaccaner Tribe:* Male and Female Figures (page 133)

Carved Outer Surface of Calabash Gourd, *Saramaccaner Tribe* (page 161)

Comb from Nigeria, West Africa (page 175)

Hair Comb, *Saramaccaner Tribe* (page 193)

/10 cont./

574 The politeness shown toward a guest springs from the idea that unknowingly one of them might easily take the very piece that the important person wished to have, and although no comment would be made on this, it could nonetheless happen that this would trouble the guest for whom they cherish special respect,
888 or that he would thereby consider himself insulted. It is particularly to old age that they pay great respect.

Chapter VI

Household and Agricultural Implements

412 The Bush Negroes mainly use adzes in order to hew their
[322] corjalen or canoes out of trees partially burned out beforehand;
[824] furthermore, they use planes and chisels in order to work their
[531] (usually cedarwood) (1) stools and parels or paddles (2). They are

1. Cedrela odorata L.

2. Hand oar.

especially fond of having these carved with many figures. For them the machete is an indispensable tool that they always carry around and use as a chopping knife, sword, and knife, indeed, even to cut splinters or thorns out of the foot with the tip. They use field axes or hatchets to cut down the bush in order to lay out their small cultivation grounds and to work the wood that they float by rafts and sell.

562 The women possess, aside from a machete or knife, also
412 mattocks with which they keep their lands and the place near the
[824] dwelling neat; they make brooms from the pina palm racemes or
[413] from rice ears bound in sheaves. They like to have scissors, needles, and pins, while for knitting they use a pointed and bent nail.

413 They spin their sewing thread from cotton with a certain
[283] tool which they call kéké; they also have a round, wooden tool
[286] called sepoe, with which they very nicely and sturdily /11/ make

6:Murault--247 K-6 (1948-1958) 1961 588 Both Negroes 588
Bonis

/163 cont./

764 787 given any indication whatever. Besides, how would he have had time to make himself understood by two men walking at top speed, crushed by their heavy load and looking straight ahead?

This upsets all the ideas I had formed about this test. The only hypothesis that remains is that the bearers have been "tipped off" by the man who went to get them (an old man of the council). But is it possible that such a crude fraud could be current practice? The Bonis are far from being stupid, they are ever suspicious /164/ and they are too talkative for such deceptions not to be laid bare by their perpetrators themselves.

Under these conditions, how can it operate--this collective suggestion which explains most of the rites of the Refugee Blacks? I can't explain it to myself.

764 769 322 [412] Manufacture of the Coffin. The kisimĭ are gathered around a pile of boards. They are about 15 in number, commanded by Boofo, head of the kisimĭ of Asisi, and Aténi (Asisi-Dipélu II). A pile of boards is at their feet; some work with a small hand saw, others with an adze; the fitting is done with a machete. /Fig. 21 appears here./

They take measurements with a graver. The bottom board is cut first, then the front and back ends. The outline of the back end, in the shape of a truncated diamond, results from a rather complex construction with the compass which I have not time to report.

764 769 [152] [262] The work is done noisily in an atmosphere of crude farce. The whole time it lasts, the kisimĭ exert veritable command over the village. The coconut trees of Kormotibo are pillaged for their benefit. The village women prepare the rice for the meal which must, according to custom, be offered to them upon finishing the coffin about noon.

/164 cont./

764 769 322 I see the head of the kisimɛ̃ make ready the fitting of the lower lateral wings. Without nailing it, he places the back end on the bottom plank, giving it the proper inclination. They put

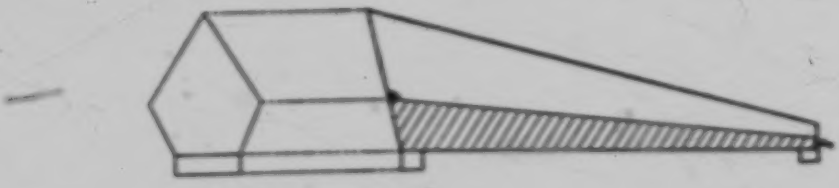

Fig. 21. A Boni coffin.

in place the board which is to serve as a wing. An elastic string smeared with soot is stretched between a_1 and a_2; they pinch it in the middle and in falling back it traces the line a_1a_2 on the wing.

(412) The cutting out of the wing is done with a saw and the fitting with the machete, then with a plane.

About 11 o'clock they begin to nail the wings. According to the rites, several kisimɛ̃ accompany in cadence the noise of the hammer blows by hitting the coffin with pieces of wood. Why this ceremony? None of the kisimɛ̃ can explain it. Perhaps it would be considered dangerous for one man to carry out alone one of the operations relating most directly to death.

764 While the kisimɛ̃ work, Way's friends and relatives do not stop /165/ arriving; their boats jam the wharf. The people wend their way toward the mortuary shed, men on one side, women on the other. It is the women who bring pieces of cloth (including those given by their brothers and husbands); the men carry tafia in bottles.

Upon arriving the women sit down, cover their faces and lament a few minutes, then sit down with the others in front of the mortuary shed. On the other side of the shed the men are seated, immobile on their small benches. An elder busies himself